To the Editor:

I am dismayed by the inflammatory tone of the letters by Lesar, Weisberg, and Wrone, which seem intended to stifle discussion rather than foster it. Mr. Weisberg's letter promotes his JFK assassination studies, whose existence I did not deny but which are irrelevant to this discussion. It fails to appreciate the difference between an analogy and an equation. I did not accuse him of being a Holocaust denier. I am grateful for Mr. Wrone's correction of my misunderstanding of his position on the assassination of Dr King. It is good to have on record his statement that he does not know who killed Dr. King. I also welcome Mr. Lesar's acknowledgment that James Ear Ray's 1974 evidentiary hearing produced no finding that a preponderance of evidence pointed to Ray's innocence.

The accusations in these letters may be a fair measure of their authors' skill at presenting an accurate, balanced, and critical interpretation of historical evidence. Mr. Lesar, for instance, repeats an accusation about Gerald Posner's use of "MURKIN" sources that was first made by Wrone. Perhaps he accepted Wrone's assurances that Posner's endnotes merely cited "MURKIN" without bothering to look for himself. By my count, Posner cites "MURKIN" sources in 352 of his 1743 endnotes. Take any of the 352 endnotes at random and it is obvious that Wrone's charge, here repeated by Lesar, is false. For brevity's sake, chapter 16's endnote 7 reads: "FBI summary document, MURKIN 3333, section 34, p. 109" (Posner, *Killing th Dream,* p. 371). The book is in print. Readers who care to check the other 351 endnotes will find Posner's documentation complete.

William Shakespeare catalogued the degrees of a reply: "The retort courteous . . . the quip modest . . . the reply churlish . . . the reproof valiant . . . the countercheck quarrelsome . . . the lie circumstantial . . . the lie direct." (*As You Like It,* v, 4, 96.) Readers can judge for themselves where each of our voices falls on the Bard's spectrum. Can we move on?

Ralph E. Luker
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